

**Remarks**

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in view of the above amendments and in light of the following remarks and discussion, are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 4-6, 9-12, 17-22, 26, 27, 30-32, 36-42, 44, 56, 58-60, 62, 63, 67, 75, and 76 are currently pending in the application; Claims 1, 4-6, 9-12, 17-22, 26, 27, 30-32, 36-42, 44, 56, 58-60, 62, 63, 67, 75, and 76 having been amended, and Claims 2, 13, 28, 43, 51-55, 57, 61, 64-66, 68, and 69 having been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, by way of the present response. Applicants respectfully assert that support for the changes to the claims is self-evident from the originally filed disclosure, including the original claims, and that therefore no new matter has been added.

In the outstanding Office Action Claims 1, 10, 12, 18, 31, 36-39, 43, 44, and 64-66 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,155,652 to Logan et al. (Logan) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,846,375 to Gilchrist et al. (Gilchrist). Claims 2, 4-6, 11, 13, 17, 19, 28, 30, 32, and 67 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Logan and Gilchrist in view of Japanese Publication No. 7-335630 to Manabu. Claims 20-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Logan, Gilchrist, and Manabu in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,143,128 to Ameen et al. (Ameen). Claim 40 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Logan and Gilchrist in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,135,052 to Fujii et al. (Fujii). Claims 26, 27, 51, 53, 62, and 68 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Logan and Gilchrist, in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,788,799 to Steger et al. (Steger). Claims 41, 42, and 63 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Logan and Gilchrist in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,622,687 to Whitaker et al. Claim 52 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Logan, Gilchrist, and Steger, in view of Manabu. Claims 54 and 55 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Logan,

Gilchrist, and Steger, in view of Whitaker. Claims 9, 56, 58, 61, and 69 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Logan and Gilchrist, in view of Japanese Publication No. 7-272834 to Yusuke et al. (Yusuke). Claim 57 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Logan, Gilchrist, and Arai in view of Manabu. Claims 59 and 60 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Logan, Gilchrist, and Arai in view of Whitaker. Claim 75 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Logan, Gilchrist, and Arai in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,911,386 to Beaudoin et al. (Beaudoin). Claim 76 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Logan and Gilchrist in view of Beaudoin. Applicants respectfully assert that the amendments to the claims have overcome the rejections for the following reasons.

The present invention is directed to a ceramic heater system (e.g., as recited in independent Claims 1, 18, and 56), and a processing apparatus including the ceramic heater system (e.g., as recited in independent Claim 19). Independent Claims 1, 18, 19, and 56 recite a gas passage provided in a heater base. The gas passage includes a plurality of first passages disposed concentrically in the heater base and a plurality of second passages connecting the plurality of first passages without being aligned in a direction towards a center of concentricity of the plurality of first passages.

Regarding the rejections of independent Claims 1, 18, 19, and 56, Applicants respectfully assert that none of Logan, Gilchrist, Manabu, and Yusuke, whether taken alone or in combination, teach or suggest the claimed features of a gas passage provided in a heater base, the gas passage includes a plurality of first passages disposed concentrically in the heater base and a plurality of second passages connecting the plurality of first passages without being aligned in a direction towards a center of concentricity of the plurality of first passages, as recited in the independent claims.

Applicants respectfully assert that the claimed features recited in independent Claims 1, 18, 19, and 56 can provide numerous advantages that are not provided by the applied references. By way of specific non-limiting examples, Applicants respectfully assert that the claimed features of the plurality of first and second passages can provide a more effective heat exchange and a high cooling efficiency.

Specifically, independent Claims 1, 19, and 56 recite “the gas passage comprising a plurality of first passages disposed concentrically in the heater base and a plurality of second passages connecting the plurality of first passages without being aligned in a direction towards a center of concentricity of the plurality of first passages,” and independent Claim 18 recites “the gas passage comprising a plurality of first passages disposed concentrically in the lower heater base and a plurality of second passages connecting the plurality of first passages without being aligned in a direction toward a center of concentricity of the plurality of first passages.” Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of independent Claims 1, 18, 19, and 56 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn, and the allowance of independent Claims 1, 18, 19, and 56.

Applicants respectfully assert that Claims 4-6, 9-12, 17, 20-22, 26, 27, 30-32, 36-42, 44, 58-60, 62, 63, 67, 75, and 76 are allowable for the same reasons as the independent claims from which they depend, as well as for their own features. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of dependent Claims 4-6, 9-12, 17, 20-22, 26, 27, 30-32, 36-42, 44, 58-60, 62, 63, 67, 75, and 76 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn, and the allowance of dependent Claims 4-6, 9-12, 17, 20-22, 26, 27, 30-32, 36-42, 44, 58-60, 62, 63, 67, 75, and 76.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in

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condition for formal Allowance. A Notice of Allowance for Claims 1, 4-6, 9-12, 17-22, 26, 27, 30-32, 36-42, 44, 56, 58-60, 62, 63, 67, 75, and 76 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

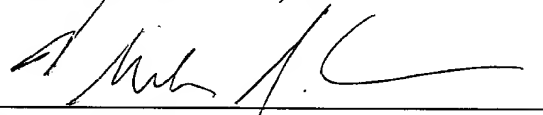
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